

Future of the African Daughter Project

...my Future begins Today...



“creating a community of brilliant, independent and self-assured young women who will be leaders of tomorrow and meaningful participants in the South African economy”

Future of the African Daughter

The Future of the African Daughter project (FOTAD) is a girl-child development project that changes the life of the ordinary girl from the township and rural areas, the African daughter aged 12 – 19 years, by providing practical and meaningful assistance, guidance and skills. As such, the project is focussed on the following 3 areas:

- i. Maths and science excellence
- ii. Leadership development
- iii. Lifeskills training

South Africa is faced with the challenge of an insufficient small pool of skill and expertise in industries which require maths and science literacy, especially among females. According to the Department of Labour's National Master Scarce Skills list released in April 2008, South Africa is short of around one million skilled workers, in Maths and Science related fields. FOTAD was founded to address these and social issues faced by the African daughter.

FOTAD VISION

“to create a community of brilliant, independent and self-assured young women, who shall be the leaders of tomorrow and meaning participants in the South African economy.”

MISSION

1. Make the African daughter realise that she can and she will have a successful future if she makes sensible decisions, and takes responsible action today
2. Teach the African daughter the importance of having dreams, setting goals and achieving these goals
3. Break the cycle of poverty, abuse and depression, prevalent among African daughters by rekindling their young minds, building character and equipping them with skills to make a success of their lives

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The work of the FOTAD project, directly and indirectly supports the following MDGs:

- MDG 1 : Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- MDG 3: Promote gender equality and women empowerment
- MDG 5: Improve maternal health
- MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

FOTAD_{YM} Information

The incident of teenage pregnancy is still a real and serious problem among school-going female learners across South Africa. Studies at antenatal clinics reveal that one-in-three expectant mothers were below 19 years in age. Only one in three of these expectant teenage mothers re-enters the formal schooling system, which leads to an enormous loss of human capital and potential. Research has revealed that the incident of teenage pregnancy is more prevalent at lower income schools and within poorer communities. It's also been found that the probability is higher among older girls, grade 11 and 12, than the younger girls.

The incidence of teen pregnancy is inversely linked to socio-economic development and supporting research reveals that teenage pregnancy is more prevalent at lower income schools and within poorer communities, hence the risk of child mortality is higher among poor teenage mothers. This is exacerbated by a proportionally higher HIV infection rate among teenage girls than boys. According to research, in South Africa the issue of abuse (physical and sexual) has a significant role to play in teenage pregnancies as most of the girls interviewed at ante-natal clinics revealed that they were forced / coerced into having sex, hence the issue of relationships, and the negotiation of safe relationships is crucial to addressing teenage pregnancy and supporting young mothers. As such, the rate teenage pregnancy in South Africa is not amenable to simply behavioural intervention.

The FOTAD Young Mother's Programme (FOTAD_{YM}) is a pilot programme to be launched by the FOTAD project. FOTAD_{YM} is serving teenage mothers, aged 12 – 19 years, by encouraging them back into the formal schooling system and supporting those back at school by providing academic assistance, guidance on motherhood, and personal development support and encouragement to prepare and equip them for a successful future.

The FOTAD_{YM} has a 2 stream focus, namely:

1. Developing and encouraging the girls in their individual capacity

- a. Maths and science academic support
- b. Leadership training

2. Developing and supporting the girls as young mothers

- a. Lifeskills training

b. Motherhood development and support

1. Developing the girls themselves in their individual capacity

a. Maths and science academic support

This includes providing assistance and tutoring in Maths and Science, to demystify maths and science, while making the subjects seem interesting and actually do-able. Extra lessons take place after school for 1 ½ hours during the week. Assistance is also provided through the provision of subject related materials such as textbooks, study guides, scientific calculators and other required means.

b. Leadership training

The programme focus is about the girls getting to know themselves, and better formulating a picture of their future selves and lives to which they are aspiring/life mapping. An important aspect of this includes the teaching of values systems, how to make choices and understanding action and consequence. The key message here is that the girls are not failures, and for them to realise that they can have, and should still plan for, a better life for themselves and their children, despite being young mothers. This programme also includes career guidance and university readiness preparation.

2. Developing and supporting the girls as young mothers

a. Lifeskills training

This programme provides guidance on a variety of issues, from social issues to career guidance and university readiness, to issues of rights and responsibilities, all of them addressed within the context of being young mothers. Mentorship for the girls falls under this programme also. The issues addressed in this programme include:

1. Sexual health and safety
2. Physical and emotional safety
3. Health and nutrition
4. Relationship issues
5. Building confidence and self-esteem
6. Money matters
7. Etiquette training
8. Study methods

b. Motherhood development and support

The key recognition within this programme is that the young mother IS a mother, and not merely the bearer of the child, hence the young mother must be actively involved in the life and development of their child, and understand their role and responsibility entailed in motherhood. Thus a lot of guidance and knowledge is shared with the girls in this programme covering the following:

- i. Mother and Baby: Health and wellness
- ii. Support and counselling
- iii. Fostering healthy relationships with their children

An important aspect of this support will be the set times for interacting with their children. This guided and structured interaction forms part of the motherhood development programme activities.

Young mothers should not be punished for having children. Rather they should be supported and encouraged to develop themselves further for their own and their children's benefit. It is thus important that the FOTAD_{YM} programme address the 2 different identities and needs of the girls, namely

- I. being a teenager**
- II. being a mother**

As such, additional activities of the FOTAD_{YM} programme include

- camps
- outings, some with and others without the children
- motivational speakers
- work experience programmes

Action Plan

Preparation

The FOTAD_{YM} programme is to be piloted in Johannesburg. The process of data and information collection, both academic and personal information, about students to be used as part of a baseline assessment, to determine need and capacity levels of the students, as well as the project resource requirements, is currently underway.

FOTAD_{YM} has developed a set of criteria for selecting the girls to participate in the programme, namely:

- Attending a school in the selected community
- Doing maths and science
- They are just passing, not star students (i.e. diamonds in the rough)
- They show some form of leadership potential
- Currently attending school, or must have been in school at most 12 months ago
- once on the programme, will be expelled should they fall pregnant

Implementation

Objective 1: Improve girls' conceptual knowledge in Maths and Science to enable them to pursue Maths and Science related professions

Objective 2: Create future leaders via the Leadership training programme

Objective 3: Provide guidance via the Lifeskills training programme

Objective 4: Provide support to teenage mothers

Time Frame

The FOTAD_{YM} pilot phase will be for an 18 month period, from February 2012 to July 2012, with the first lot of matrics anticipated to complete in December 2012. Also, December 2012 will be the result after a full academic year on the FOTAD_{YM} programme.